



MEETING THE PROJECT MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

2004

Biography

Kenneth Mitchell

Nodes 2/3 Project Office Manager, NASA Marshall Space Flight Center

In 1959 Kenny began his engineering career as a co-op student with the Army Ballistic Missile Agency (ABMA) in Huntsville, Alabama. In 1960, when a significant part of the Werhner Von Braun rocket team transferred to the new NASA center called the Marshall Space Flight Center, he became a charter member of the MSFC. He graduated from Auburn University in 1964 in mechanical engineering and worked on the thermal designs of the Saturn I, IB and V launch vehicles. During the late 60's and early 70's he was involved with the MSFC engineering efforts on the Skylab Program in the areas of crew life support systems and development of biomedical experiments.

His international project experience began with the Spacelab Program in the early 1970's. MSFC was assigned the NASA responsibility for managing the Spacelab development with the European Space Agency. He spent 7 years working with the ESA European team in the design of the environmental control and life support systems (ECLSS) and successfully integrating them with the Space Shuttle Orbiter systems. This effort involved prime contractor work in Germany and major subcontractor efforts in France, Italy and Germany.

For five years he was the branch chief of the MSFC Environmental Control and Life Support Systems with primary responsibility for the Space Station Freedom ECLSS. He also served the Space Station Program as the international systems working group chairman for the ECLSS. He interfaced with European and Japanese partners and integrated their designs with the U.S. system designs. He also managed a large in-house life support systems testing activity to assure the technology levels for selected regenerative systems was adequate to support Space Station requirements.

In 1994 he was requested by the International Space Station program manager to be the ISS Program manager for the Moscow Liaison Office in Russia. He served in this position for 2 years and led a team of on-site Boeing and NASA personnel during the early Shuttle/Mir missions and development of the FGB and Service Modules for the ISS program. The on-site NASA team was given diplomatic status and was headquartered at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

After this tour of duty and his return to the MSFC, in 1997 he was chosen as the chief engineer for the Nodes 2/3 Project assigned to MSFC by the ISS Program. This project office was to manage the design, develop, integration/testing and launch of these two flight elements. This management task required working with the Italian Space Agency and its contractor, Alenia Spazio. In 2000, Mr. Mitchell was made the Nodes 2/3 Project Office manager. He continues in that position today. He successfully delivered Node 2 to KSC in June, 2003 where it is under preparation for launch to ISS to complete the "core complete" stage of ISS assembly. Node 3 which contains the regenerative life support systems and waste and hygiene compartment for supporting crew greater than 3 on ISS is currently being built.



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